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ABSTRACT

Implementation of Open University courses from Great Britain into the Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville system is described. The following aspects of the program in general and of implementation are discussed: the method by which Open University courses offer education to students; the problem of selecting among Open University courses the specific courses for pilot implementation at an American university; and means by which Open University courses may be made to interlock with each other and also with conventional programs. Two important technical matters are the sum of initial seed money required for beginning Open University work and the way in which Open University courses might be guided through the process of approval for academic credit at an existing American university. An office will have to be established for Open University purposes, and students will have to be selected, recruited, admitted, and processed. An additional requirement is staffing the program. (SW)

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The Open University Is For You

by

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Prologue

I

Readers of Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales" will remember the Pardoner's quotation from St. Paul. "My theme is always the same," the Pardoner says, "and ever was, Radix Malorum Est Cupiditas." The root of all evil is the love of money. These words and the figure of the Pardoner himself, an extremely equivocal figure, are a proper beginning for any discussion of innovation in higher education in the United States today. Newcomers to the literature on innovative education will find an odd mixture of the highest ideals and the root of evil in most of the book they are given to read.

American literature on the Open University is not an exception to this general rule. The Open University of the United Kingdom was founded and continues to operate upon an essentially idealistic basis--that is the most important fact about it. On the other hand, most American institutions which use Open University materials are forced to assess them on a basis which is essentially financial. The Open University of the United Kingdom was founded out of the desire to bring higher education to a large section of the public hitherto unreached in Britain by the traditional colleges and universities. This ideal is not clearly relevant to the American situation since in fact the corresponding section of the American public has been reached by higher educational institutions at least since the end of World War II. Consequently, the Open University of the United Kingdom, as seen from the United States, becomes an innovative delivery system. That is to say

that the Open University, which in Britain is intended to be an agency for social transformation, is in the United States seen as simply a modification of traditional teaching methods. The American emphasis is not upon reaching a group new to higher education as is the case in Britain, but rather upon the method of teaching students.

I shall not further rehearse the history and motives of Open University work in the United Kingdom, for such information is readily available from the Open University itself. Rather, I shall comment in the coming pages upon the applicability of Open University materials in the United States. I, myself, do not feel that British idealism is at all irrelevant to the American use of Open University materials. But as the figure of the Pardoner reminds us, idealism can become hollow. We must be on our guard to borrow only the ideals which we can use. I shall return to this fact at the end of my discussion.

A consensus has been reached in the academic community in the United States that change of one sort or another is inevitable in post-secondary education. Many teachers regret this fact but most administrators have come almost to welcome it. There is a consensus, then, that change, if you will in the form of innovative delivery systems, is inevitable in higher education. The question resolves itself not into whether change shall take place but what sort of changes will in fact occur. If this is your first introduction to the idea of Open University or of open learning systems, you will be amused to learn that large numbers of people believe that within the next ten years higher education within the United States will be in large measure, and I quote a member of the

board of Illinois higher education, "in the can." What this inelegant phrase means is that much of the average student's experience of education will consist of taped or pre-prepared materials which the student apprehends via some electronic medium like television or a computer terminal or a tape recorder. This situation, alien as it is to most traditional members of the academic community, is now nonetheless, actually in prospect. The technology is available, that is to say, the machines can be built, and very large sums of money are now being devoted to building them. State-wide educational radio and television equipment satellite transmission, large scale computer pools, things of this sort are much further advanced than many of us realize.

Be of good cheer. We cannot stop change in any aspect of American life; we cannot stop change in higher education. We can, however, as we journey toward whatever goals are in front of us, agree to work together to try to control and humanize change as it actually occurs. There is no reason for us to give up hope that the journey itself may be more interesting than the goal or the prospect. British Open University materials, developed as they were out of idealism, remind us, in the United States, that the new technology of higher education can be harnessed to serve the old goals of humane, liberal, enlightened education. No one who surveys Open University materials can doubt their academic quality. Many of the courses are superb.

The issue for Americans, therefore, does not concern the ultimate purpose or academic quality of Open University materials. The issue is to utilize those materials efficiently and appropriately in the United States.

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Most American Universities which examine Open University materials with a view to using them will wish to experiment with a pilot program of one sort or another. At Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville this pilot program consisted of the running of two Open University whole courses. One course was T100, the introductory course to technology. The other course was A100, the introductory course to the humanities. I strongly commend the pilot program approach to those American universities which might be considering Open University materials. I also strongly commend to such universities the use of whole courses from Open University.

I shall outline briefly in this second part of the introduction my intentions in the rest of this essay. First, the pilot program will involve the selection from among all Open University courses of the one or more courses which are to be offered. Secondly, money will have to be obtained and budgeted for the future. Thirdly, an office, or at least part of an office, will have to be established for Open University purposes. Fourthly, students will have to be selected, recruited, admitted, and processed. Last but not least of all, faculty will have to be recruited and encouraged to look enthusiastically upon the Open University experiment.

What I shall do in the essay as a whole is to describe the pilot program at SIUE and briefly to indicate how the program developed from its pilot stage into a full and permanent Open University operation. It may be that this overall description will be useful to persons in other circumstances; it may be that portions of it may be useful; it may be that none of it will be useful.

Chapter 2

Open University Courses

Open University courses actually work. They are sound academically. It is true that they work differently from conventional classroom courses but Open University courses will not disappoint students or faculty so long as the courses themselves are properly run. Again and again Open University programs in American universities will encounter logistical or operating difficulties. The academic quality of the courses, however, will enable Open University personnel to hold their heads high in the midst of whatever problems they do encounter.

I shall discuss Open University materials under three headings. First of all, I shall briefly outline the method by which Open University courses offer education to students. Second, I shall discuss the problem of selecting amongst Open University courses the specific courses upon which an American university might base a trial or pilot Open University project. Finally, I shall discuss the means by which Open University courses may be made to interlock one with another and also with conventional programs.

Open University courses do not differ from the best conventional courses in terms of academic quality, not is the content of Open University courses necessarily more innovative or less traditional. The chief difference between Open University courses and conventional classroom courses is that Open University courses have so little room for personal interaction. Open University courses require of both the faculty and

the students a habit of mind different from that required by the conventional classrooms. Wit, charm, charisma, these things have little place in Open University courses. Both students and faculty are required by an Open University course to develop the habit of lonely, hard, long-term studying. Both students and faculty must develop the capacity to learn by themselves from books. This is by no means a weakness for Open University courses; on the contrary, it is a strength. Indeed the dependence upon personal interaction in the classroom may be a fundamental weakness of conventional American higher education. This is a controversial point; I shall not dwell upon it. However, I should point out that the acquisition of education by oneself in a lonely, studious manner is in the highest tradition of American education and indeed of European education. I shall give only two examples on the positive side. Readers of Benjamin Franklin's autobiography will find a description of self-education almost exactly akin to that which could be given by many Open University students. Secondly, the great German writer Johann Joachim Winckelmann, perhaps the founder of German romantic artistic criticism, is described by his modern biographer Wofgang Leppmann as having based his career upon the habits of study required by himself, on his own, as a young man. I give these two examples because they remind us that men of genius in every age have found education of first quality outside of the traditional classroom. I say men of genius, and it may seem to the reader that it would be necessary to be a genius in order to educate oneself. The point, however, is that now one need only to develop the habits of mind associated with solitary study. If one can do that, Open University materials will do the rest.

This habit of mind is equally necessary both for faculty and for students. Indeed, in the case of Open University courses there may properly be said to be no teacher in the conventional sense, for both students and faculty are as it were seated in a circle around questions and materials for which no one of the participants is wholely responsible. In the conventional classroom, the teacher stands as an authority and the students as passive followers. I know that this is not often entirely true, but it is for the most part true. Open University courses make the teacher as it were "primus inter pares" first among equals and no more. I think that this is an enormous psychological advantage, and combined with solitary study this psychological situation enables the student to develop originality and an intellectual agressiveness which is highly desirable. It also enables the teacher to step aside from a role in which he is ultimately responsible for what goes on in the classroom and to join with his students in a quest.

I have stated that Open University courses depend essentially upon written materials. This point cannot be made too often. Open University courses are not properly television courses or media courses. Television and radio programs play an important and at times an essential part in them but the courses themselves are centered not upon television and radio but upon books. Films and tapes, important as they are individually, are subordinate to the books. Open University books are of two kinds. First are specially prepared workbooks divided into units. Each unit corresponds to a week in the course. Each unit presumes a single class meeting with students and for the most part each unit presumes one film and one tape ancillary to the written material. A second

variety of written Open University material is to be found in the standard, to use the publishers' word, the "trade" books which are assigned to Open University students. The films, tapes and workbooks substitute for much of the classroom experience that students in conventional courses would have in lectures and discussion. Open University courses also use, however, the kind of standard textbooks which conventional courses employ. Often, indeed, an Open University course in a given subject will use the textbook that conventional courses in that subject are using in American and British Universities. This is an important point, especially to those who are newcomers to Open University materials, for a cursory overview of publishers' lists of Open University materials will not reveal the trade books essential to the course. You should not be led astray by the fact that these conventional trade books are not clearly listed on course lists of Open University materials. The reason for the absence of trade books is that most of them have to be ordered through regular bookstores rather than through Open University suppliers. The trade books are nonetheless essential for the fact that they are obtained through conventional channels.

Open University courses actually work. Permit me to reiterate that point with which I began this section. The courses work, but you will note from my overview of the materials and the habits of mind associated with them that they do not work in the same way conventional courses work. This is a simple point but it is likely to be missed by the faculty and students alike. The habits and the materials of the conventional classroom will not sustain the faculty or students in the

conduct of Open University work. If a cheerful acceptance of the new situation presented to students and faculty by Open University courses is not immediately obtained, a sourness of mind may well develop on the part of people who, missing their conventional situation, do not find the proper substitute for it. The faculty member especially who undertakes to teach Open University material must practice a perfect gentleness and cheerfulness with regard to the enterprise. His attitude, his display of the habits of mind and the proper use of time needed for Open University courses, will be one of the principal contributions he can make as an Open University faculty member to the success of his students. Cheerfulness of this sort is even more important to the faculty member than a minute knowledge of the subject matter of the course. At least in the humanities and the social sciences a faculty member may well benefit from a naïveté, if I might use Neitzche's phrase, "a cynicism combined with innocence" towards the material of his courses. A faculty member who understands how to study and who can impart the knowledge of that sort to his students is much more likely to be successful in Open University teaching than a faculty member who is possessed by minute knowledge of the subject but who doubts the capacity of the Open University course to educate his students in that subject. However, I shall return to this point later in this pamphlet and shall not develop it fully now.

I promised to discuss the problem of selecting amongst myriads of Open University courses the one or more courses on which a pilot project might properly be based. This problem is an important one, for the wrong

selection of courses or the failure of a pair of courses once selected might well destroy the willingness of conventional university authorities and personnel to proceed with Open University work of any sort. Therefore, you should give some care and attention to the selection of Open University courses. There really are two ways to go about selecting Open University courses. You could pick one or more as they appeal to you without reference to any other concern; or, what is really the same thing, you could pick one or two courses which seem to fulfill specific course needs on a campus but which do not relate to an overall offering of courses apart from the conventional program. Secondly, you could pick one or two Open University courses with reference to a long-term general scheme for developing a complete program based upon Open University courses or courses similar to Open University courses. Each method for selecting courses for a pilot program has its advantages. Neither is right or wrong apart from the particular situation in which you find yourself. I shall discuss each method.

The selection of a couple of courses apart from a general scheme may well be a wise move if there are curriculum needs unmet in your university which can be met by Open University courses. Students can thus take conventional courses for the most part and one or more Open University courses as supplements. Upon the whole, the courses in science and in the technical fields from Open University have a very fine reputation amongst professionals in those fields, and you would probably not be unwise to select courses in science, technology, mathematics, etc. as an opener for a pilot program. I have been myself gratified by the consistent good will which members of the science and

technical profession in the U.S. have shown toward Open University courses. I think that you probably expect that technical courses would be less likely to succeed than general courses in a pilot program. I am by no means sure but that the reverse is more likely to be the case. Try it.

If you choose courses for a pilot program which are later to become the basis for a much more extensive or general scheme of higher education by means of Open University or like educational systems, I strongly recommend that you set out first of all the scheme for all the courses and that you choose from that scheme of courses the one or more which you think are most likely to work. In other words, if you desire courses to form eventually part of a general program, work out the general program first then work out the individual courses which it is expedient to offer at once. I here reprint the scheme for a Bachelor of Liberal Studies degree which we have developed at Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville. This involves the use of Open University courses exclusively for the development of a four year program of a generalized nature leading to a generalized academic degree. Obviously considerable variety is possible even within the context of a general degree such as this, and, of course, you may well wish to develop a much more specific program in one or two of the standard academic areas. The B.A. handbook from the British Open University would be most useful to you in developing such a scheme.

Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville started out with T100 and A100. This selection proved a wise choice. A100 is an especially

fine Open University course, one of the best they have made. T100 likewise has had a very considerable success on our campus. It is, like A100, accessible to students. Like A100, T100 requires no previous background. Like A100, T100 can be taught by faculty from a variety of disciplines.

Since the commencement of our Open University program we have added two other foundation courses, D100 and S100, and have enjoyed success with both. However, if you desire to begin by offering a foundation course, or two foundation courses, I would not urge you to begin with either S100 or D100 (D101). Both require some preparation on the part of the student and both require at least some modification by the faculty in order to make them successful in the American context. D100, has now been replaced by a new course, D101. All these foundation courses, A100, T100, D101, and S100, are of considerably greater scope than many conventional American freshman courses. Each of these foundation courses or first year courses in Open University involve a range of disciplines. In the case of a particular foundation course you should survey material in the course and see whether or not it seems to you to adapt itself more to one or to another aspect of your curriculum. The breadth, however, of the courses should be seen as an advantage. Too often students entering American universities are confronted with a bewildering array of labels attached often to simple and ordinary ideas. Many standard academic disciplines have a bureaucratic character when a freshman student confronts them. The courses represent professions with professional apparatus, but they do not seem to a student so rational a way of organizing information and study as they do to the technical professional. Consequently, the broadly designed foundation courses provided by the Open University have very considerable appeal.

Chapter 3

Seed Money & Course Approval

I shall add a brief word concerning two important, but rather technical, matters: the sum of initial seed money required for commencing Open University work as a constituent part of an existing American university and secondly the way in which Open University courses might be guided through the process of approval at an existing American university for academic credit.

The money issue is a touchy one and I can speak to it most clearly by recounting some of my own experience. Our Open University Project began with an initial grant from Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville of $35,000.00 which some was given for expenses other than salaries. So in fact the $35,000.00 does not by any means represent the total initial commitment of the university to Open University activities. As a matter of fact, however, many universities do have resources which are available to an Open University director in the form of faculty time, office space, and so on, resources which can be redirected relatively painlessly. What is difficult to find is ready money for the purchase of materials, for advertising, for broadcast costs, and for other related expenses. The $35,000.00 was an adequate sum of money. This of course was two years ago; perhaps slightly more would be needed now. As much as $40,000.00 or $50,000.00 would not be out of line. From this sum of money can come an initial offering of two courses, as I described, and secondly, the foundation for a considerably expanded Open University Program which comprehends

not only the initial offering of two courses but a much more extensive full four years of offerings.

The Open University of the United Kingdom will be happy to supply upon request price lists for its courses and these lists can be used to calculate your own costs for the purchase and acquisition of materials. It is also, of course possible to rent films thus considerably reducing the cost for start up.

Course approval is another matter. I suggest that the surest means of piloting Open University courses through the approval process is to imitate Mark Twain's work as a pilot. He records in Life on the Mississippi how a captain once asked him, when Twain was a young pilot, if he knew where the channel was and he said, "No sir, but I know where the snags are in the river." Well, this is the kind of advice which you need. You need to locate, first of all, what snags Open University courses will encounter as they slide through the approval process. Try to provide for those snags. If you try to provide against the problems, the channel will disclose itself, will discover itself. One of the ways to discover the snags is to insinuate yourself at an early stage into the good graces of the various committees that approve courses. You can do this by keeping the members of those committees advised at an early stage of Open University prospects and methods. It is probally unwise to attempt to offer Open University courses in a way which avoids the normal bureaucratic approval process. Open University courses should be perceived by the entire academic community as worthy and standard courses which are easily able to undergo the closest academic scrutiny. This is in fact the case,

and no suspicion should be allowed to arise concerning the matter. Face the credit granting committees with a steady gaze. Look each member in the eye. Let them read the books. Offer to let them teach in the courses. In general, give them a sense of full, solid academic worth. It is wise to avoid the suspicion that the courses are experimental and will soon go away. On the contrary, make clear to people that you expect these courses to be around for some time, that you are establishing a program which will be permanent but small. I have found it useful to assure members of the committees with which I deal, that the constituency for Open University which exists in our community is by no means enormous. There will be Open University students far into the future, but on the other hand there will not be thousands and tens of thousands of them. The need for Open University exists. It is not likely, however, that the Open University will grow in such a way as to swamp the existing offerings. I might sound absurd in mentioning this last point, but in fact fears of this sort do sometimes exist in the minds of committee members, and it is well to address them early on and lay them to rest.

Chapter 4

The Establishment of an Open University Office

As an independent budget and faculty support are essential to the commencement of a successful Open University program on your campus, so also is an independent Open University office. In my experience it is difficult, I would almost say it is impossible, to run a successful Open University operation out of an office which is also concerned with other responsibilities. On the other hand, it is not necessary for an Open University office to be large. Three to four people, I would say, would comprise an optimumly sized Open University staff exclusive of faculty. It would be quite possible to get along with two people at the beginning. One of these persons should be a bonafide faculty member in an existing department. Another person should be a staff person chosen with regard to the difficulties the office will encounter in logistical matters. One person, that is to say the faculty member, should be able to carry the academic side of Open University difficulties; the other person, the staff member, should be able to deal with difficulties of scheduling, keeping of records, the early production of address lists, purchasing, the replication of assignments, and the endless quantities of mail and phone calls which deluge any Open University operation.

I would say as a general rule the first comment about an Open University office in the United States is that it would not be wise to imitate British Open University office methods. On the whole, an American Open University office must be an ancillary part of a larger unit. It cannot

be independent and national as the British Open University is. Thus, British office methods based on a volume and an independence which do not exist in the American context are not likely to work in the United States.

An independent Open University office will find itself duplicating many of the processes of a normal university; this must be held to a minimum. Admissions, the keeping of records, and other official university functions should be performed by the offices established for those functions. It will of course be necessary at times to jarr those offices into performing their functions expeditiously. Such procedure ought to become a routine part of Open University office work. It is essential to combine courtesy with dispatch in such work. Neither hestitate to urge speedy action on the one hand, nor on the other urge action in such a manner that repeated contact of this sort becomes horribly abrasive to the people with which you have to deal. I would suggest that it would be very unwise at <u>any</u> provacation to become so bitterly hostile to another university office that you cannot repair cordial relations. This policy, I must adivse you, will mean that again and again you swallow anger and a sense of righteous discontent.

An Open University office will have three principal routine taks, I shall discuss them. The office will have to recruit students by various means. It will have to provide for the smooth operation of Open University courses by the obtaining of rooms, the obtaining of books, and other logistical functions. Finally, the Open University office will have to maintain a rigid academic schedule even over the objections of the faculty teaching the courses.

Recruitment of students is of the first priority. Try to become reasonably well-versed in (1) the technique required for the admission and registration at your university and (2) what I call the psychology and economics of enrollment. For this latter point it would be advisable if you would ask yourself the simple question: What kinds of students are most likely to be motivated to enroll in Open University courses in the area which we serve? An advertising campaign gives the Open University program luster, respectability, and a sense of community identity; to advertise is not necessarily to recruit students. But the advertising campaign is none the less essential for being indirect. The best advertising for an Open University program in the long run is the successful operation of Open University courses. I therefore recommend a splash of advertising at the commencement of the program followed by a smaller consistent advertising program throughout an initial two-year period. And I recommend that when an initial group of students are taken in at the beginning of the first year, they should be given absolutely the best services you have available. This will enable them by word of mouth to spread the word of your program and to recruit students for you. Just as I urge you to have an independent budget and an independent office, so I urge you as a matter of crucial priority not to promise to your superior officials large numbers of students as an initial benefit of Open University offerings. Be vague on this point. Promise instead to offer high quality education to the students, however few they may be, whom you do get initially. This will ensure that if you come up with lots of students the first round, your officials will be surprised and happy. It will also ensure that expectations will be realistic. In the event only a handful

of students may actually prove to be enough for your program if in the long run both students and faculty are happy with the courses.

An advertising campaign ought to be run on three separate tracks. First of all, try to get free television and radio time through public service spots. Local television stations and special local radio stations may be far more receptive to these kinds of suggestions than you might initially expect. Try to find someone on your campus who has had experience with the placing of public television and radio announcements and ask him for the names or if possible for personal contact with the people at the television and radio stations who make these decisions. On the whole, announcements on educational television and radio stations will be far less valuable than announcements however brief and few on commercial radio stations. Rock music stations, sports broadcasts, news broadcasts, prime time television--these are the channels through which you must hope to reach your audience. Classical music stations and educational stations are not likely to provide audiences who will be anxious to enroll in these courses. Secondly, place advertisements in the local newspapers. There are two kinds of advertisements in the local newspaper which will be useful to you. First, make a brief advertisement containing only a few words such as "Open University, Enroll Now" and then the address of your office. A second good type of advertisement contains dense blocks of print. This type of advertisement describes your program in detail. Both the first and second kinds, which we facetiously label "teasers" and "tombstones," have their place in newspaper advertising. I would suggest that you start out with the

tombstone, that is to say with the dense block of print--if possible, take a whole page in your local newspaper--and that you use teaser adds from time to time in the subsequent period of your advertising campaign. You should be aware of the fact that many people do not read advertisements closely and that often the dense block of print that you composed so hopefully and so carefully will be simply passed over by readers. There is much to be said for teaser advertisements. If I am correct in telling you that advertising simply gives your program community recognition and does not itself impell people to register as students, then teasers are as effective as tombstones. Tombstones are effective especially for getting the details of the program to other members of the academic community rather than recruiting students. All kinds of your colleagues will tell you, after the tombstone appears, what a splendid advertisement you had. It remains to be seen, however, how often the phone will ring in your office with students who wish to enroll. The third type of advertising consist of brochures and posters which you hand or mail directly to prospects. This is extremely important, perhaps of the three kinds, the most important, and you should give great care to it. If you wish, you can draw up a brochure which is then reprinted in the paper as your tombstone ad. Such a brochure should list the nature of Open University work, the kind of credit offered, fees, the specific courses offered, if possible the faculty involved, and it should give a description to the student of the way in which this set of Open University courses fit into a degree program. A slogan--our slogan is "The Open University is for You" --and a logo or specific design are very useful items, and if you can develop

them now you can use them on all subsequent material. They look especially good on a brochure and the logo and the slogan can themselves serve as teaser advertisements. Constant repetition of the slogan, the logo, and tombstone advertisements printed always in the same format give your program considerable community recognition through advertising over a long-term period. So much for advertising; I shall now speak about the logistics of the office.

You must be sure that when a prospective student calls your office he or she is given immediate attention and that he or she feels a sense over the telephone of dealing with an efficient, established operation. No one dealing with your Open University office, even from its very earliest period, should feel that your office is a chewing gum and baling wire operation. You should always give the impression of firm, clear direction. My experience is that if Open University activities are operated out of an office which is also responsible for other duties, this sense of firm, clear direction will be lacking. The link between advertising and recruitment on the one hand and classroom on the other must be a well considered, well-constructed one. I have seen Open University operations in other universities fail simply because the phone was not adequately answered and the office was not adequately run. I cannot over-emphasize the importance of this point.

A second matter dealt with below is the need for students, once enrolled, to receive the same sense of firm, crisp, clear administrative efficiency.

Finally, let me return to the matter of the university calendar. I recommend that you adhere to the regular academic calendar of your university

unless there are strong reasons for not doing so. The reason for this is that students will expect to register at the normal time, will expect vacations at the normal time, and faculty also will be much more cheerfully able to conform to Open University scheduling. You should beware of the tendency of Open University classes to get off the track in terms of time and you should do everything possible to keep Open University courses to a rigid, predetermined schedule. Make sure that the dates of assignments, examinations, and classes are clearly set out at the beginning. Mail these dates to students and urge faculty to adhere to them. It is especially important that you do not lose the first week of classes through confusion and misconception. Make sure that students are aware of the location of the first week's classes. Make sure, and this is an important matter, that a mailing list emerges from the registration procedure which enables you to contact students with their first week of assignments before the academic term actually begins. It appears a tautology to urge that the academic calendar of the university ought to be adhered to, but in my opinion it is in simple matters such as this that cause abrasion and failure if they are not attended to. You cannot win a battle with an army whose quartermaster corps has failed to feed it for the preceding week.

Chapter 5

Students, Faculty, and Staff

The recruitment of students, the propitiation of faculty and the retention of staff are all vital matters for the success of an Open University program in an American University. All three are interrelated and must be accomplished simultaneously and maintained if the program is to be a success. Assuming that the reading is contemplating setting up an Open University program from scratch, it follows that the selection of staff for the Open University office is the first item chronologically to present itself. I shall, accordingly, deal with staff first.

It does not matter very much whether or not the office is staffed by persons with great experience, with considerable salaries, with high titles. It matters very much indeed that the staff be familiar with Open University as opposed to conventional university programs, and it matters very much indeed that the staff be enthusiastic about the Open University program. I myself recommend that staff workers who are hired be students taken from the conventional program who are prepared to adapt themselves to Open University office work. It is not necessary to hire students who would themselves be likely Open University prospects. It is important, however, to hire students who understand the difficulty of making universities work, who understand the need to apply innovative methods to the university system in the United States. I have had considerable success with recruiting students from traditional humanities disciplines for work in the Open University office. Students in those

disciplines are acutely aware of the problems of conventional university training. Likewise, students from the humanities disciplines are acutely aware of the difficulty of obtaining employment in the traditional humanities job market. They are eager, willing, intelligent workers in the context of innovative programs. If money for running the office is in short supply, a number of student workers can be hired, more cheaply than if it were staffed with one or two civil service employees from conventional offices. It is important not to be daunted by the prospect of filling in all kinds of conventional forms and handling the conventional work of an office. Such work can be handled by other people, much of it can be postponed. If necessary, simply hire a student and give that student the job of finding out what bureaucratic chores are absolutely necessary. Assign that whole responsibility to the student.

In the midst of all this I would urge you to be reliable so far as your employees are concerned. Back them up, nurture their enthusiasm, give them a sense of your own confidence in them, retain them even when they are criticized outside the office, and in general create an atmosphere of trust and confidence which to some extent makes up for the chaotic working conditions and the abrasion of dealing with other offices.

If you must recruit older workers from the conventional employment sector, for instance if you must inherit workers from other university offices, an entirely different approach ought to be taken. Such persons are likely to expect two things neither of which they will encounter in Open University work. For one thing they will expect clearly set rules or guidelines concerning tasks in the office. These guidelines will be

expected to convert Open University work into a series of routines. This cannot be done. Indeed, to attempt to routinize Open University work in its early stages would probably kill off the whole effort Secondly, persons of this sort will lack the zest and enthusiasm of younger students. It is essential that office staff be prepared to go the second and the third mile with the program. Only an enthusiasm which is, as Edmund Burke would say, "un-bought," will serve the Open University. What you want in an employee is someone who would do what you would do in a circumstance or, even better, do what ought to be done in a circumstance even if it is something which you did not anticipate. An employee who merely does what he or she was told, and who ignores the result of such action, cannot be part of a successful innovative office.

One final word. Firing people enormously reduces morale all around. Even when firing is justified, it reduces morale. Therefore, exercise very great care in the initial stages when selecting persons. Hire people, if possible, for a probationary period. Attempt to get some good indication of how well they work without having a formal commitment to them. Let a prospect come in to work for a day or two in the office. Some people who look very good initially will turn out to be a disaster. Some people who seem unlikely are the best workers of all. Hire people and commit yourself to them so far as you can once they are hired.

As I have described the office, it consists of a group of enthusiastic students, mostly recruited from the conventional humanities disciplines,

working for the first time, working perhaps for low wages but informed by spirit, "élan." These people are intelligent, they are committed. But they have little commitment to the conventional offices on the university campus.

Faculty may be recruited on somewhat the same basis as the staff I have just described. Faculty hired from the existing academic job market (i.e., external to the University) will be very happy to have a job. They will be enthusiastic, they will be helpful, they will quickly adapt themselves to the Open University system, they will become its zealous defenders and supporters, they will invent the new modes of instruction necessary for Open University work in the context of your university and your campus. They will be, on the whole, a constituency apart from the conventional campus operations.

An alternative which we have used for the majority of courses is to use faculty from the existing academic departments. A teacher is "lent" to us and returns to his department the credit for teaching Open University courses. This means that we have obtained very able instructors, and we have also obtained people who are often quite eminent and experienced in the traditional methods of college teaching. However, it has often been the case on our campus that some men and women who are fine teachers in the conventional program find themselves uneasy in Open University work. I suspect that there are two reasons for this. One reason is that the kinds of psychological circumstances that are associated with success in the classroom do not work with classes which provide so little scope for interpersonal activity. Thus, all the signals and the sense of security that a successful teacher in the conventional

program is accustomed to will be absent in this program. Or to put it differently the signals of success and failure in Open University teaching will be confusing to a person from the conventional setting. Secondly, a person in the conventional program at your university may well feel a sense of commitment to that program and may subconsciously feel that the Open University is a snare and a delusion. This is the other side of the coin from the enthusiasm of the faculty member hired specifically to teach Open University courses. I cannot urge upon you strongly enough care in the selection of Open University teaching staff. Early contact with department chairpersons is essential. Open University faculty play a role if anything more important than the faculty in conventional courses. Open University faculty must persuade the students of the viability and importance of Open University study. Faculty must persuade the students even in the face of logistical and other difficulties that the courses will work, that they a e in fact proper college courses, and that the students will learn. .t is hard enough for Open University students to pick up the habits of study necessary for Open University courses even in a favorable atmosphere. If students hear a suppressed criticism of the program from the person charged with teaching Open University courses, the students will become quickly discouraged and disoriented. This kind of thing happens more often than you might believe. Some faculty will persuade themselves that they have some sort of stake in exploring the operation of an Open University course, but they will also believe implicitly that the course will not work. Such faculty can make a failure not only of their own course but of a wider area of the program.

What I have said about faculty is closely related to what I want to say about Open University students. Students must be persuaded to be enthusiastic about Open University work. They should be recruited and retained in such a way as to nurture their enthusiasm and to insure that the majority of them will have a good experience in the Open University program. Students should be confronted at the outset with the requirements, especially the requirements for independent study, which will be placed upon them by Open University registration. They should be encouraged to enroll bec use they feel they can undertake work and bring it to successful conclusion. They should be confronted alsowwith the many advantages of Open University work. They became, after all, members of an international program with considerable prestige. Open University work has a certain amount of style and snap. All these things are considerable advantages. None of them should be left unmentioned.

Open University students will on the whole differ from faculty, however, in that students will possess a greater flexibility. Students will, in the long run, constitute a sort of constituency for Open University. Students rapidly pick up a sense of esprit de corps, or sense of enthusiasm and sense of commitment to the program and its success. Students, in short, become the greatest asset to the Open University administrator. A year's successful operation of the program, even with a small group of students who are persuaded of the worth and success of the program, will in the long run prove to be enough of a beginning. Even a few students--ten, fifty, a hundred--will constitute a satisfactory

cadre if the long term is kept in view. Better ten happy, well-adjusted, educated students than a hundred miserable, failing students. Therefore, I do not recommend a recruitment program which relaxes standards of admission. This contrasts with the British approach. Open University students in Britain are permitted to register for Open University courses even when no conventional British university would permit them to matriculate. As I say, I do not recommend this policy in the United States. My reason for this is that on the whole conventional programs in the USA already provide remedial opportunities for students whose standards of credentials at matriculation are considerable below the norm, whereas this is not so in Britain. Others may disagree with me, but I do not recommend that Open University courses be used to compete with the remedial courses in the conventional program. From the American point of view the Open University constitutes a unique method of instruction. It is particularly adapted to those students who already hold full-time employment or who are prevented by other factors from committing themselves to a rigid class schedule. The Open University courses are not designed, so far as the American context is concerned, for students whose level of skill upon entry to college is far below normal.

I recommend that the recruitment of students involve a target group of students selected in your area. In the case of Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville, we looked at the two Illinois counties from which most of our conventional students come. We serve a population of 700,000, and we quickly recognized that an undifferentiated effort to register students for Open University work would be ill-advised. We

carefully selected groups of potential students and concentrated our recruitment effort on them.

We selected groups of students in the following fashion. First we sought full-time employees, persons who are in jobs which are rewarding, which keep them extremely busy but nonetheless persons who need better educational standards than chance and circumstances have permitted them to obtain. Secondly, skilled manual workers, middle mangement people, federal and state local civil servants, these are the groups with which we have had most success. Almost all such persons operate in a context in which education is encouraged by the institution which employs them, at least officially encouraged, but it is difficult nonetheless through the institutional constraints to find courses and classes which will fit into the schedule. Open University is designed for such people. Flexible classroom scheduling, availability of the instructor, the conduct of much instruction through the mails and by other indirect means, all these factors make Open University work a highly desirable method of college instruction for students such as the ones I described.

I therefore urge you to identify an appropriate target group. If your university is located in a metropolitan area, you may choose city civil servants and skilled workers at a local industrial enterprise. Having selected your target groups, find out how you would expect an individual within those groups to handle what I call the psychological and economic side of enrollment. Find out how those individuals would pay for Open University courses. Find out what benefits are available to them, scholarships, company policies, things of that sort. Have all that information at your fingertips. Secondly, determine what kinds of motives

might impel individuals in your target groups to register. For instance, some companies and many civil service organizations provide increased pay or promotion for persons within their institution who obtain higher education. Some institutions even reward students on a coure by course basis. Find out about these policies. Visit the education officials in the institutions which you have targetted. Most big corporations, many civil service organizations have offices devoted to education. Furthermore, you will find that really big corporations and really big civil service organizations possess an internal education system. Try to find out how that system operates and how you might serve in an ancillary fashion the purposes of the institution in question. You will perhaps find, if you hunt long enough, that some institutions in your area, corporate or otherwise, welcome with open arms a chance to work with you in providing educational opportunities to their own employees. You may in the long-run discover that you can become part of an attractive fringe benefit policy on the part of some large corporation or institution. It is up to you, however, and not up to the student to put this package together. Neither the corporation nore the student will make the creation of such educational opportunities his or her particular job. It is your job. Do it.

I have discussed elsewhere the kinds of skills necessary for students in Open University work. I shall not mention that matter again here except to point out that you must capitalize on the enthusiasm and sense of adventure which students will bring to Open University courses. You should develop, if I may use the words, "snazzy" or stylish brochures, handouts, and, in general, make the access to Open University

registration and to Open University courses seem and, indeed, make it to be, a sophisticated and demanding kind of thing. Make students aware that they are in fact enrolled in college, that college work and college standards will be expected of them. Make sure that students understand that the enterprise upon which they embarked by registering is a highly serious and a highly important one.

RETRACTION

"All that is written is written for instruction," says St. Paul. All that I have written is intended to be helpful. None is intended to be harmful or to reflect more than the passing circumstances of my own experience. Please forgive those things that "tendeth unto sin."

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open university studies

open university studies

A consortium of five colleges and universities will begin an Open University program in autumn 1975. Greenville College, Lindenwood Colleges, SIUE, UMSL, and Webster College are jointly offering a program which enables students to earn *regular college credit through home study.* This leaflet briefly describes the consortium's program to you. For application forms or for more information please write to any of the institutions listed below.

history

The Open University concept originated in Britain. In order to provide quality college education to those people who cannot attend regular on-campus classes, the British have created a home study program which does not rely heavily upon classroom instruction. Several American universities are using this program with success. This concept, and the study materials developed for the Open University in Britain, are the basis of Open University Studies.

methods of instruction

The Open University student learns through means of audiovisual materials, texts, workbooks, and contact with faculty members at learning centers. Each week beginning September 20 KETC-TV Channel 9 will televise materials on Saturdays from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. and on Tuesdays from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. KWMU-FM will broadcast radio programs on Sundays from 8:00 to 9:00 p.m. and on Wednesdays from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. Each learning center will have audiovisual facilities enabling students to hear tapes or see films. Students will have the opportunity to discuss television and radio programs with faculty members and to engage in dialogues about texts and workbooks. The learning centers will be located throughout the St. Louis and Metro-east area.

the courses

During the first year of Open University Studies two courses will be offered. Each course will last for the entire academic year and carry either sixteen semester hours or twenty-four quarter hours of *regular academic credit.* At some institutions students may enroll for non-credit participation. "Humanities: A Foundation Course," includes study of history, literature, art, and music. It is designed for all students interested in man, his history, and his cultural achievements. "Making Things Work: Man, Technology, and Environment," is a course about the nature of technology, dealing with the *what, why, should,* and not merely the *how,* of this important aspect of modern life. Both courses are designed for the beginning student, and are designed to teach students to write and read carefully, to think clearly and logically, and to handle theories and evidence with sophistication.

who should enroll

Enrollment in the course is open to high school graduates and others with the desire and maturity to work toward a college degree away from a college campus. Each of the participating institutions offer in-depth counseling for students desiring information about their eligibility for participation in Open University Studies.

The participating educational institutions recommend that students enroll for the entire year in one course. Students who wish to take the courses in a sequence other than the normal one should discuss this request with the institution of their choice.

cost and enrollment

Interested students may enroll at any of the participating colleges and universities. There is a common core of television and radio programs, and texts and workbooks, but each institution will provide its own style of working with students. Tuition and fees vary according to the regular fee schedules established at each institution. Students are encouraged to examine each institution's specific approach to home study by writing or telephoning any of the following colleges and universities:

Greenville College
Greenville, Ill. 62246
(618) 664-1840, x 209

The Lindenwood College
Evening College Office
St. Charles, Mo. 63301
(314) 723-7155
946-6912, x 274(Toll free)

Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville
Box 15
Edwardsville, Ill. 62026
(618) 692-2125

University of Missouri–St. Louis
233 Benton Hall
8001 Natural Bridge Road
St. Louis, Mo. 63121
(314) 453-5380

Webster College
470 E. Lockwood
St. Louis, Mo. 63119
968-0500, x 296